

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 HA-05 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0671
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 01901

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PEPR, UK, EI
SUBJECT: PM LYNCHMARKS ELECTION ANNIVERSARY WITH
REMARKS TO POLITICAL CORRESPONDENTS

1. A YEAR AFTER HIS RECORD VICTORY AT THE POLLS IRISH PRIME MINISTER JACK LYNCH MET WITH LOCAL POLITICAL CORRESPONDENTS TO COMMENT ON THE NORTH; ON THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD AND PLANS RELATING TO THE ECONOMY; ON ALLEGATIONS OF GARDA BRUTALITY; AND OBLIQUELY ON HIS OWN POLITICAL FUTURE. AS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST, PARA 2 CONTAINS AN EXTRACT PERTAINING TO THE NORTH FROM A REPORT FILED BY IRISH PRESS CORRESPONDENT MICHAEL MILLS. SEE SEP TEL FOR SUMMARY OF OTHER TOPICS.
2. "THE TAOISEACH SAID THAT HE HAD TWO MEETINGS SO FAR WITH THE SPECIAL REVIEW GROUP SET UP BY FIANNA FAIL ON NORTHERN IRELAND, WHO HAD ALSO SET UP SUB-COMMITTEES TO STUDY THE PROBLEM. IT WAS HOPED THAT WITHIN SIX MONTHS THERE WOULD BE AN INTERIM SET OF PROPOSALS.

THE GOVERNMENT POLICY WAS BASED ON AN INDICATION FROM BRITAIN OF AN INTEREST IN THE ULTIMATE REUNIFICATION OF THE COUNTRY AS A LONG TERM SOLUTION. HE WOULD
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STILL BE PRESSING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT TO GIVE AN INDICATION OF THEIR INTEREST IN REUNIFICATION AS A SOLUTION; OTHERWISE, ALL WE WOULD GET WERE INTERIM SOLUTIONS.

MR. LYNCH SAID HE INTERPRETED A CALL FOR A DECLARATION OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW FROM NORTHERN IRELAND BY THE

BRITISH AS A PROPOSAL TO WITHDRAW AT A GIVEN TIME FROM INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND AFFAIRS. THAT WOULD MEAN THE WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH FORCES; THIS HE HAD ALWAYS REGARDED, IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AS A DANGEROUS MOVE.

MR. LYNCH STATED "I BELIEVE THAT WOULD BE DANGEROUS, IN THAT IF A DATE WERE GIVEN - 5, 10, 15 YEARS HENCE - THERE WOULD BE A POSSIBLE BUILD-UP OF PREPAREDNESS BY MILITANTS ON BOTH SIDES FOR THAT DATE. IT WOULD BE DISASTROUS IF THAT HAPPENED."

IF THE BRITISH EXAMINED THE PROBLEM AND REALISED THE COST OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT AT PRESENT RUNNING AT 800 MILLION POUNDS ANNUALLY, WHICH WAS UNLIKELY TO BE REDUCED ON PRESENT POLICIES, IT WOULD BE SEEN THAT THAT WAS NOT IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHAT THE AVERAGE BRITISH CITIZEN WOULD WANT.

HE DOUBTED IF THE AVERAGE BRITISH CITIZEN REALISED THE EXTENT OF THE BRITISH FINANCIAL COMMITMENT, THE DAMAGE TO PROPERTY IN THE NORTH AND THE DANGER TO LIFE, NOT ALONE TO PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND BUT TO BRITISH ARMY PERSONNEL. ALL THESE COMBINED WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THE BRITISH PUBLIC THEMSELVES WOULD WISH FOR AN ULTIMATE DISENGAGEMENT BY BRITAIN FROM IRISH AFFAIRS.
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MR. LYNCH SAID HE HAD HAD NO INDICATION AT ALL FROM BRITAIN THAT THEY WERE THINKING ALONG THOSE LINES. MR. CALLAGHAN AND HIMSELF HAD AGREED TO DIFFER AT THEIR COPENHAGEN MEETING IN THEIR APPROACH IN THIS RESPECT. THE FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN NORTHERN IRELAND - FEDERAL OR OTHERWISE - WOULD THEN BE OPEN FOR DISCUSSION. OBVIOUSLY THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE REASONABLE COMPROMISE ON BOTH SIDES, ESPECIALLY HAVING REGARD TO THE STATED POLICIES OF THE MAJORITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND. WE COULD NOT EXPECT THESE PEOPLE TO COME INTO A UNITED IRELAND IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THERE COULD BE A FEDERATION OR SOME OTHER FORM OF GOVERNMENT, BUT PEOPLE LIVING ON THIS ISLAND, NORTH AND SOUTH, WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS.

THE PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD BY THE BRITISH LAST YEAR FOR DEVOLUTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND WERE UNACCEPTABLE AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NEED TO DO SOMETHING MORE ESPECIALLY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE MINORITY POPULA.

TION. BUT THERE COULD BE NO RETURN TO THE FORM OF
GOVERNMENT THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO THE COLLAPSE OF STORMONT.

HE WOULD TRY TO IMPRESS ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AFTER
THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION THAT A POSITIVE INITIATIVE WAS
NECESSARY. OTHERWISE, THERE WAS THE GRAVE DANGER, BECAUSE
OF THE CONTINUING REMOTENESS OF ACKNOWLEDGED LEADERS FROM
A SAY IN ADMINISTRATION, THAT THE MILITANTS WOULD BECOME
MORE ACTIVE.

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THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTION WOULD BE
CRUCIAL FOR NORTHERN IRELAND.

ANY RECOMMENDATION BY THE FIANNA FAIL COMMITTEE ON THE
IMPLICATIONS OF IRISH UNITY WOULD HAVE TO COME BEFORE THE
PARLIAMENTARY PARTY FOR ENDORSEMENT.

ON CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE, THE TAOISEACH SAID IF THERE WERE
A RESPONSE FROM NORTHERN UNIONISTS ON THE BASIS OF A
CONSTITUTION TO WHICH THEY COULD ADHERE IN THE EVENT OF A
NEW ADMINISTRATION IN IRELAND, THEN IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE
TO EXAMINE THE CONSTITUTION IN ITS ENTIRETY.

IF ARTICLES 2 AND 3 AND THE ARTICLE PROHIBITING DIVORCE
WERE TAKEN OUT OF THE CONSTITUTION, THEN IT SEEMED TO HIM
THERE WAS VERY LITTLE IN IT THAT WAS OBJECTIONABLE FROM
THE NORTHERN VIEWPOINT. IT WAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE
ENTIRE COUNTRY THAT THE CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE REVIEWED.
HE DID NOT AGREE WITH PIECEMEAL CHANGES." RENDAHL

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